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Agenda items 38, 40, 78
and 142

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Letter dated 17 October 1994 from the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to refer to the letter dated 13 October 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to Your Excellency regarding the abduction of an Israeli soldier, in which he states the following:

> "According to intelligence sources, Corporal Waxman is being held captive in the Gaza Strip. In accordance with the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and with the subsequent Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area signed by the parties, the responsibility for the life, welfare and safe return of Corporal Waxman lies with the Palestinian Authority" (A/49/510-S/1994/1158).

Prior to that letter, the Israeli Government suspended the peace talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization and, in what amounted to collective punishment, sealed the entire Gaza Strip. Several high-level Israeli officials repeatedly announced that they held the Palestinian Authority responsible for the life of the soldier, and even insisted that the head of the Palestinian

Authority was personally responsible. Such positions were echoed by some others as well. Furthermore, earlier in the week, following the attack which took place in Jerusalem on 9 October 1994, some high-level Israeli officials propagated the rumour that one of the attackers in the incident was a member of the Palestinian police force, even at the time when the facts were known that the person was not a Palestinian and was holding an Israeli visa.

Shortly after the abduction of the soldier, the Palestinian Authority did condemn the abduction and maintained that the suspension of the talks was not appropriate and that the soldier, according to their information, was not in Gaza. The Authority, nevertheless, did its utmost to deal with the situation in the territories under its control. On 14 October 1994, an Israeli attempt to rescue the soldier took place, and it became known that the soldier was being held in Beir Nabala in the Occupied West Bank, which is still under Israeli control, and all Israeli assertions mentioned above proved to be wrong.

It was difficult to understand some of the Israeli positions, but it remains our strong hope that such positions do not suggest any negative motives towards the peace process at its present critical juncture. In any case, we believe that the integrity of the peace process should not have been endangered by hastily made positions and decisions. At this time, however, we would like also to express our satisfaction that the two parties have decided to resume the peace talks in Cairo this week.

The Palestine Liberation Organization reaffirms its condemnation of the abduction of the Israeli soldier. It reaffirms as well its condemnation of terrorist actions committed by Israelis, especially those committed by the illegally present Israeli settlers, against the Palestinian people.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 38, 40, 78 and 142.

(Signed) Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations

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PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/131 of 13 December 1985, with the purpose of providing financial assistance to representatives of indigenous communities and organizations who wish to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The Working Group, which was established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1982, is a subsidiary organ of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and meets annually in Geneva. The Group has a twofold mandate: to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and to evolve international standards concerning indigenous rights. The reports on the Working Group's eleventh and twelfth session are contained in documents E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/29 and Add.1-2 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/30 respectively.

2. The Voluntary Fund is administered by the Secretary-General in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and other provisions relevant to this Fund (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/1983/20). In this task, the Secretary-General is advised by a Board of Trustees composed of five persons with relevant experience on indigenous issues and serving in their personal capacity. The members of the Board are appointed by the Secretary-General for a three-year term renewable in consultation with the Chairman of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. At least one of the members of the Board of Trustees shall be a representative of a widely recognized organization of indigenous peoples. The report of the first session of the Board of Trustees was presented to the General Assembly at its forty-third session in 1988 (A/42/706).

3. The Board of Trustees held its sixth session from 19 to 23 April 1993 in anticipation of the Working Group's eleventh session in July 1993, and its seventh session from 25 to 29 April 1994 prior to the Working Group's twelfth session. During its sixth session, the Board was composed of Mr. Leif Dunfjeld (Norway), Mr. Alioune Sene (Senegal), Mr. Hiwi Tauroa (New Zealand), Mr. Danilo Türk (Slovenia) and Mr. Augusto Willemsen-Díaz (Guatemala). During the seventh session, the Board was composed of Mr. Leif Dunfjeld (Norway), Mr. William Ole Ntimama (Kenya), Ms. Lois O'Donoghue (Australia), Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Philippines) and Mr. Augusto Willemsen-Díaz (Guatemala), who has served as the Board's Chairman at all of its seven sessions.

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 40/131, laid down certain criteria which beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund must meet. The Board of Trustees has developed more detailed elements for selection criteria, and these criteria are reflected in a questionnaire sent out with letters informing indigenous peoples about the activities of the Voluntary Fund prior to the meeting of the Board.

5. In its resolution 40/131, the General Assembly foresaw funding by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other private or public entities. As of 1 May 1994, in response to requests issued by the Secretary-General, contributions had been received in 1993 and 1994 from the following Governments:

Government	Amount US$
Australia	6 212
Canada	23 693
Chile	3 000
Finland	32 938
Greece	5 000
Hungary	500
Japan	20 000
Luxembourg	9 830
Mexico	6 000
Netherlands	49 534
New Zealand	30 015
Norway	24 978
Sweden	26 156
Switzerland	13 525
Tunisia	1 298

6. In addition, during the same period contributions were received from the following non-governmental sources:

Name	Amount US$
Shimin Gaikou Centre	2 100
Instituto Nacional Indigenista	6 000
Little Apple	22

7. At its sixth and seventh sessions, the Board examined requests for financial assistance for 85 and 109 indigenous representatives, respectively. In the light of the funds available, it recommended at its sixth session the award of 53 travel and subsistence grants. The 53 beneficiaries came from the following countries and Territories: Argentina, Australia, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, French Polynesia, Guatemala, India, Mexico, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Thailand, United States of America and Zaire. At its sixth session, it recommended the award of 43 travel and subsistence grants. The beneficiaries came from the following countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America and Venezuela.

8. The eighth session of the Board of Trustees is scheduled to be held from 24 to 28 April 1995, prior to the Working Group's thirteenth session in July 1995.